Congregations, Students and Young Adults

An action information book

THE ALBAN INSTITUTE, INC.

COMMUTER STUDENT/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY PROJECT

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This resource manual for local church ministry with young adults and commuter students has been produced through a special grant of the American Baptist Higher Education Team.

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Catholic Diocese of Arlington
United Methodist Church in Northern Virginia

Congregations, Students and Young Adults

An action information book for
congregations, including a
lay ministry study course:
"Faith-Development in Young Adults"

Robert T. Gribbon

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COMMUTER STUDENT/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY PROJECT

THE ALBAN INSTITUTE, INC.
MOUNT ST. ALBAN, WASHINGTON, DC 20016

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS:

This is a new approach to commuter student/young adult ministry and it raises some questions. Here a few words are offered in response to some of the most common questions:

1. WHY SHOULD CONGREGATIONS BE INVOLVED IN STUDENT MINISTRY?

   Many young adults commute to local colleges, live at home, work in the community, and look (if anywhere) to the local church to meet their religious needs. But many congregations are not equipped to affirm the style of questioning faith and struggle for identity which is characteristic of the young adult years. Also, most denominations are unable to place campus ministers on all campuses.

2. WHY DO YOU SPEAK OF STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS?

   One characteristic of higher education today is that many students are not young adults. Many returning students are in their forties or even their sixties. But churches seem to have a particular difficulty in relating to the young students. From the viewpoint of congregational life, the problem lies in ministering to an age level, roughly 18 to 29 years old, which includes students and non-students, commuters and those away from home, part-time and full-time workers and students.

3. WHY DOES THE PROCESS BEGIN WITH OLDER ADULTS?

   Often there is a lack of contact between older and younger adults in our society. The church is one of the few places where there can be serious intergenerational contact and life, and a natural part of its life is to share faith from generation to generation. When older adults find that they can talk with young adults and that it is mutually enriching, exciting things happen.

4. WHAT KINDS OF MINISTRIES DO YOU SEE DEVELOPING?

   The emphasis is on one-to-one ministries between generations both through the congregation and through the contacts that older adults may have in their work on the campus or in the community. However, some congregations may develop other forms of ministry which suit their needs and resources. A program within the congregation might be developed, or a congregation might become involved in relevant issues in the community. For example, an active involvement in some educational issue might be a natural outcome.

5. WHAT IS THE ALBAN INSTITUTE?

   The Alban Institute is an open partnership of people, clergy and lay, who are working to build better congregations. It is an independent, non-denominational, non-profit organization concerned with research and development within religious systems. The Alban Institute has recently published a small paper, "The Problem of Faith-Development in Young Adults" which describes the theory behind the Commuter Student/Young Adult Ministry Project.

Congregations, Students

and Young Adults

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FEEDBACK & ORDER FORMS

Reflections on the Basic Problems and Needs

campus

A few years ago I was working as a campus minister at a large state university where there were a number of other campus ministers, and a full program of worship services, educational programs, Bible study groups, and service projects centered around a large, interdenominational chapel on campus. There was always individual counseling to be done, and every spring a number of couples who wished to be married. It was taken for granted that we were ministering to students, and the concern of the campus ministry staff was with how we might do more with faculty members, with the administrative staff, in the residence halls, and how we might speak the word of the church to the great issues of the day.

community college

Then various denominations became concerned that we extend our ministry to a nearby community college with a growing number of students. I was sent to spend half my time as the "non-denominational" campus minister at the community college. I quickly found that, with a limited amount of time, I was the only campus minister for a campus of over 10,000 students where the traditional patterns of campus ministry did not work.

On the community college campus, the faculty and college staff were accessible and often willing to cooperate in specific programs, but there seemed to be few opportunities to minister with students. It is characteristic of community colleges that there is little sense of community on campus. The campus is a place to work, not to live. Many students attend classes on a part-time basis and are quickly drawn away from campus by job and family responsibilities. "Co-curricular" activities, student government, clubs, organizations, programs and the like which many of us are familiar with in college experience do not draw the commuter student back to campus. Commuter students tend to look to the communities in which they live for social activities, health care, and other services. Therefore, we might assume that students look to the local churches to meet their religious needs.

local congregations

With this in mind, a program was developed to provide resources to local congregations to assist them in their ministry with students. A bi-monthly newsletter was sent to pastors to help them become more aware of the college, the needs of students, and the resources available for ministry. Several consultations for pastors were held on campus and a directory of local church programs and services was developed for use by students. These resources were well received, but little happened as a result.

Subsequently, we conducted a series of interviews with local church pastors to find out what kind of ministry they had with students, what they saw as the problems, and what we might do to help. We learned some important things.

First, pastors were not concerned primarily with the community college because in any one congregation there were only a few students attending the community college. Other students were going away to college, or were commuting to one of half a dozen other colleges in the urban area. Pastors were concerned about students both in and out of college and with young people of college age working in the community. These local church ministers experienced a difficulty in ministering to an age level: young adults from the late teenage years to the early thirties.

young adults

Second, the pastors expressed a widespread sense of frustration and some guilt about their failure to minister effectively with young adults. A great variety of approaches and programs had been tried but only the very largest congregations had young adult groups, and every congregation found that young adults were dropping out of active congregational involvement. A few congregations had invested large amounts of time and energy in this ministry and were not successful.

However, as we talked more, we found that many pastors did have significant contacts with young adults who might occasionally drop by to see them, or who might seek out the pastor when they wanted to get married. A few knew young adults who sang in the choir or taught Sunday School. Some pastors had informal pastoral ministries with the parents of young adults.

"success" criteria

The informal and occasional ministries with young adults were undervalued, and the clergy often felt like failures, because the criteria for "success" were the establishment of a young adult program and frequent attendance of young adults at Sunday services. Attendance and activity are the usual success criteria for congregational ministries, but we maintain (and will later explain more fully) that these are not appropriate or achievable goals for young adult ministry. Where attendance and activity are the goals, most ministries with young adults will be frustrated; but on the other hand, it is difficult for congregations to invest large amounts of time, money, and energy in ministries which do not "pay off" in terms of increased activity and attendance.

Thus, for example, even pastors who were very interested in students and young adults felt that they could not give very much of their time to this area of ministry. In a few cases we found that our having previously provided resources for ministry had increased the frustration of pastors because we raised possibilities of ministry that they could not follow-up on.

limited time

In addition to the minister's limited time, we discovered another drawback to relying on the pastor as the only minister with young adults. Where a pastor had been in a congregation a number of years he (there were no women in this sample) had a number of contacts with young adults which had originally been developed in the high school years. But when the pastor left, there was no one else in the congregation who had a continuing contact with the young adults who were not active in congregational life.

Overall, we were forced to recognize the fact that there were a large number of commuter students and other young adults who were not effectively being ministered to by either campus or congregational ministries. This is true around the country and many of the factors which operated in our experience are operative elsewhere as well. Some of these factors are:

1) Limited campus ministry resources: During the heyday of denominational student work, one national denomination estimated that they needed one campus ministry staff person for every 300 denominationally-affiliated students on campus. But today there are over 10 million students in college degree programs. In the past ten years the number of community colleges has doubled. At the same time, the resources available for specialized ministries have diminished in many churches. Some prestigious colleges and church-affiliated schools may have enough campus ministers to work in traditional ways, but on most campuses there will be very limited professional staff involvement.

2) The commuter student phenomenon: The traditional ways of working with students which were developed on residential campuses don't work very well with commuter students. The student church or fellowship, the chaplain with an open door, the volleyball games, Bible studies, service projects, and late night bull sessions about religion that many people fondly remember from college days developed when people lived on campus in a community of peers and there was a sense of endless time, time for activities and time to get to know one another. The commuter student today is generally pressed for time, and divided between campus, job, family, friends and time spent in commuting.

In addition the commuter phenomenon brings a new pluralism to the campus, in the form of many students who previously might not have attended college. There are now older students, re-entering women, ethnic minorities, and students from every social and economic background. The need, problems, hopes and interests of the students are often foreign to the chaplain; and the diversity among students makes it difficult to plan events and programs of common interest.

These factors affect not only campus ministers but all campus professionals in student affairs or student activities. These professionals are aware that the old kinds of student activities which were developed on residential campuses are not attracting or meeting the needs of the new commuter students, and they too are struggling to find new approaches to their mission.

3) Every church is adjacent to the campus. In the past we thought of some churches that were in walking distance of a campus as having a special mission to the campus. But today students commonly commute ten miles to college and some regularly commute fifty miles or more. In urban areas, this means that a congregation is likely to have students attending every campus in the area. A church across town may have more student and faculty participation at a particular college than the church across the street from the campus. In many places it is realistic to say the city is the campus.

In rural areas, it probably is easier to identify with a particular college, but still every congregation is involved. Many community colleges in particular are regionally based; serving the needs, governed and paid for by all the people of a given political jurisdiction. Students live throughout the area and drive to the campus only for classes. Even the little "church in the wildwood" may find that it has a student ministry.

4) Student ministry is part of young adult ministry for congregations. The distinction of town vs. gown grew up at a time when students wore distinctive academic dress, but was perpetuated in college towns where students lived in their own set-apart residential community with peers. Today the majority of students live in, and are part of, the larger community. Commuting makes it easier to drop in and out of college, and to attend part-time. This blurs the distinction between student and non-student status. You may talk with a person for some time before you discover that among other things he or she is attending a local college.

Many students are older adults and only a portion of young adults are students. But from the viewpoint of local congregations, the concern is with an age level, young adults, rather than with student ministry or higher education ministry as such.

5) Young adults are a concern and problem for congregations: There is a lot of positive concern for young adults among pastors and lay people. They would like to do something for or with young adults and feel that they ought to do something. But they find this ministry closed to them. Many congregations have invested considerable time and effort in young adult ministry at some point and most have not been successful.

Among pastors there is a frequent syndrome of frustration, guilt, and somethimes anger because they feel that they ought to do something with young adults but find themselves unable to do anything successfully. In some cases this leads to the conclusion that it is not possible or necessary to work with young adults and the attitude that nothing nothing needs to be done because "they'll come back when they're thirty."

They don't all come back. Some young adults are permanently turned off by the church. Those who do come back commonly report that in some way the church touched them in these years -- a chaplain who was open to their questions, a friend or co-worker who set a good example, a pastor who helped them at a point of need, someone who cared.

Pastors report that those who do come back frequently have not grown much spiritually in the intervening years. The years away from active involvement in the church, the "wilderness journey" is a necessary part of spiritual development for many, but ignoring young adults fails to meet their needs. Especially in this searching period, young people need mentors, examples, Christian friends, and signs of the care and concern of the church.

Finally, the high rate of suicide in this age group is a grim reminder that we cannot wait until they're thirty. As much as any other people, human beings in their twenties are in the midst of life, and need the care and concern of others.

6) Congregational objectives don't match young adult needs: The goals of most ministry in congregations is to bring people into active participation in the church organization -- though fellowship, worship, service, and educational activities. These activities match the style of affiliative faith which congregations best express, and active participation of individuals is necessary for institutional survival, maintanance and growth. Aside from the pastor's visitations, almost all ministry in congregations is thought of in terms of program. Thus, when attention is drawn to the needs of a particular group, such as young adults, the common response is "we ought to have a program for them."

However, it is characteristic of young adults to be critical of institutions, impatient with traditions, highly mobile, and engaged in an independent and individual period of searching and transition. Their most important needs are not met by affiliative groups and their faith is seldom expressed through religious membership and institutional loyalty.

The conflict of congregational goals and young adult needs leads to continued failure in ministry as measured by the traditional criteria of success. Providing new resources for ministry with young adults is insufficient so long as they are used with the old goals and criteria in mind. Pastors and congregations need to be enabled to discover a new agenda and motivation for ministry with young adults before they can minister effectively.

I. Opportunities:

The opportunity and problem for student ministry in the local church may be described with a simple diagram.

The campuses are central locations where students come together, but commuter students come together only for classes, not for other activities. The churches are scattered throughout the community in which the students actually live. But each church is related to only a part of the student body. Thus the common complaint of churches is "We have too few students to do anything."

few students

It frequently is the case that the local church has too few students to form a student group, particularly considering the fact that only a small percentage of the students will be attracted to this kind of ongoing activity. But there are other kinds of ministry that the local church engages in.

When we conducted a series of interviews with local church pastors, we found a number of examples of ministry through the local church. But all of the pastors had said initially that they were not involved in student ministry.

Pastors saw students as part of the young adult age group which they felt that their congregation was not ministering to. All reported the common phenomenon that young people tended to drop out of active participation in church activities in the late teenage years.

drop out

The following pages report some ministries of pastors and congregations who didn't think they had a student ministry, and some of the opportunities for ministry in any church.

Weddings

Weddings and marriage preparation provide an obvious occasion when some young adults seek out a ministry from the church, and all the pastors we interviewed were involved in this ministry. Some officiated at only one or two weddings a year, while one officiated at as many as twenty.

We found that those who officiated most frequently had the most clearly laid-out program for premarital counseling. All who officiated at ten or more weddings a year had clear requirements of what they expected of the couple, including three to six hours of time spent in counseling.

It appears significant that the ministers who place the greatest demands on couples in terms of time are frequently sought out by couples who are not members of their congregation. It may be that the willingness of the minister to take the time and to take the people seriously is seen as a valuable gift and service.

One pastor who frequently performs marriages for non-members routinely follows-up by phone or letter six months after the wedding to see how the couple is doing, and if they would like to talk with him further. But most ministers report that few young married couples seek their help. Frequently the couple moves away to another area soon after the wedding so there is little opportunity for on-going contact.

Counseling and Contact

Most of the clergy we talked with said that they were not engaged in counseling with young adults. However, about one-third maintained some continuing pastoral relationship with young adults who had grown up in their congregation. These ministers spoke of a fairly consistent pattern of episodes. Many students who go away to college will call or stop by the pastor's office when they are home on vacation. In these encounters there is frequently talk of "how it's going," talk of changes in the young adult's life, and tentative discussion of future plans.

Some ministers reported this kind of occasional pastoral tie with individuals who remain in the community. There are those young adults who have "contact with the priest but not the parish" or who "will talk with me but can't hack the church." Other young adults who maintain an occasional contact with the minister also attend services occasionally on their own but their attendance is sporadic, and they "will come but not participate."

A few congregations try to maintain contact with students through written communications and special events such as a gathering at Christmas time, or occasional suppers for college students. It is reported that such events are best attended when there had been a close-knit group which graduated from high school together, when there was a close personal tie with the minister, and when the calendar is convenient.

The most crucial factor in all these forms of ministry is the personal relationship between young adults and the clergy. The ministers who reported the most contact with young adults were those who had been in the same congregation five or more years and who had been actively involved with the young people at some point.

One minister makes a point of being known to children through an address to the Sunday School; he participates in a year-long confirmation class; he goes camping and on retreat with the young people; he attends some high school functions when he can; and finally, he maintains a personal correspondence with those college students who are away.

In contrast, one honest minister confessed that he simply did not recognise one long-time member of his congregation when the young man attended one Sunday without his parents.

One clergyman reported some significant contact with non-church young adults through his previous involvement in community work. The church buildings are used by various non-affiliated youth and therapy groups, and the minister has established informal and "fatherly" relationships with a number of persons who are now young adults and who occasionally "drop by."

Another minsister who has been active in the community, especially in the field of mental health, said that he frequently counsels young adults who are not members of his congregation as a result of his own contacts with young professionals and referrals from others.

A minister whose church is near older homes occupied by students and young adults reported that he knocked on doors and got to know his neighbors. He found them not interested in the church, but interested in religion, open, and interesting to talk to.

Parents

None of the clergy immediately brought up contacts with parents as a form of ministry to young adults, but when asked, all related some ministry with parents in terms of their relations with young adult offspring. With very few exceptions, the ministry is in the form of informal counseling or pastoral conversation.

A minister who has young adult offspring of his own spoke of informally dealing with separation problems, the parents' adjustment to the empty nest, and their personal anxiety over their children. Other ministers said the same thing.

Many of the clergymen whom we interviewed have young adult offspring, and many shared the fact that their own children are not active participants in the church. In this and other areas they share the pain of parents who are concerned about their young adults but who know there is little they can do. One pastor told me "I know parents appreciate a question or expression of real concern for their kids."

Despite the difficulties of letting go for parents, pastors mentioned most frequently the problem of young adults who won't leave home. One parent asks, "How do you push them out of the nest?" Parents express concern over the "unmotivated" teenager at 17½ or 18; at the same time, some separation anxiety is manifest in the parents.

One pastor says, "There are always problems when a young adult is at home because it's impossible to stop being a parent." Another says, "Some kids can't leave; there are prior problems that make leaving home a crisis."

A minister who does formal counseling with teenagers and parents comments that "working with parents and younger siblings often illuminates tensions that parents are having with the young adult living at home."

Some specific problems were mentioned. One pastor recalled counseling a widow whose daughter and boyfriend were living together at home. Another spoke of the difficulty of two cases in which there was a shattering of family unity because the young person had made a religious commitment which seemed to reject the parents.

Another spoke of the suicide of a student and its impact on parents. One assistant minister said that parents ask him to call on young adults; the father says, "Try to get them involved in church." In two cases, the parents' difficulty in talking or reluctance was noted as a problem.

In a rural area, a pastor speaks of hidden problems and concerns in close-knit families. In a very affluent area, a pastor speaks of the difficulty successful men have expressing parental concern and grief.

Integrative Activities

A number of the clergy we interviewed spoke of their desire to integrate young adults and students into the life of the congregation, to involve them in much the same way as other adults. Almost every congregation had a few young adults involved in some way and one pastor, after talking a while, said, "You know, more attend than I realized."

For those young adults who are involved with the local church, it seems to be common for them to be involved at one point, but not generally active.

For example, in one large congregation some young adults sing in the choir, others teach Sunday School, some college students attend the Sunday adult class, some young women were involved in Guild study groups when they were dealing with women's issues, young adults were active in the bazaar when the proceeds were going to a children's hospital, and young adults initiated a short-term hunger project.

Music was cited as an attraction in three large congregations which have a professional music program. A large formal congregation with an urban flavor finds some single young professionals and students attracted by good music, good preaching, and a congregational life-style greared more towards single individuals than to families.

A very different congregation finds young professionals involved in its life because of the congregation's reputation for social action and a dedicated life-style.

In the more rural congregations, those few young adults who are around seem to "fit in" more with everyone else, the clergy report. One rector notes that country society seems to have more of a place for young adults who live at home and identify with parental activities. The choir is an important attraction, and in one congregation those who go away aften rejoin the choir for Christmas and during the summer.

This is part of the sense of place that these small congregations seem to generate. The minister of a small congregation reports that when those who go away come back, "everybody is glad to see them." The pastor of one small church found that a small supper and discussion program provided a good context for involvement of two students in an intergenerational context.

II. Directions:

In every congregation many students and other young adults continue to come to worship at Christmas and Easter. Often pastors say, "They only come at Christmas and Easter." But these are opportunities for ministry, and, particularly with young adults, is an important sign that the Christian tradition is still in some way important to them.

These and other opportunities for ministry with students in the local church are frequently missed because pastors look for the same behavior in young adults as in other ages. If young people aren't active in church programs and don't attend regularly on Sundays, the pastor is frustrated.

But regular, voluntary institutional involvement is not characteristic of young adults in any area of life, particularly in the area of religion. National surveys indicate that 80% of young adults say that religion is important in their lives but only 25% say they are regular church attenders. There are other things to do on the weekend, and particularly as we have seen for commuting students, many competing pressures.

More importantly, young adults are in a highly independent, transitional period in their lives. They are unlikely to make long-term commitments to any organization or institution. They are trying to make sense of life for themselves and their faith is likely to be highly individualistic and expressed in a personal searching and questioning.

For individuals in this stage of life, occasional attendance at church or an occasional informal contact with the pastor can be very important. Many college chaplains have had the experience of hearing, years later, that their brief encounter with an individual was a very important event in that person's life. However, many of the clergy tend to view occasional pastoral contact with college students and other young adults as peripheral and insignificant. Because the student attends infrequently he or she is seen as a peripheral member; and because the pastoral contacts do not lead the young adult to a more frequent involvement, they are seen as insignificant.

A minister says, "There are some young adults who have been pretty faithful," meaning that they have been regular in attendance. If we describe as "faithful" one who struggles with the meaning of faith in terms of meaning for one's own life, then we would see many more young adults as being faithful, and the clergy would feel more successful in their ministry with young adults.

In even brief pastoral contacts with the pastor the young adult may be testing his own development and changing identity. In longer discussions, a student may be exploring the viability of the Christian faith.

III. Implementation:

If one purpose of ministry with students and young adults is to assist the individual to develop as a whole person in faith, then we see that there are opportunities for this ministry in every congregation. Potentially, every pastor can assist in the faith-development of students and other young adults.

As a practical matter there are three major problems which keep pastors and congregations from engaging in this ministry.

1) The chief expression of faith in most congregations is affiliation, coming together for worship, study, fellowship, and action. It is difficult for most people who like congregations to understand and support a style of faith which does not find its expression in affiliation.

2) Many older pastors and lay people feel uncomfortable with young adults. Sometimes this is expressed as dislike for particular lifestyles or values, but more often is seen simply as a withdrawal from contact because, "I wouldn't know what to say."

3) As institutions, congregations need active participation and monetary support to survive. Encouraging the personal development and individual faith-development of young adults seldom "pays-off" in these terms, and therefore gets a low priority.

Overcoming these barriers requires the development of:

-UNDERSTANDING the development of young adults and the special goals of ministry with this age group.

-INVOLVEMENT with young adults on a one-to-one basis after having looked at some of the anxiety we feel in dealing with them.

-SUPPORT, both personal and institutional, to engage in a ministry which does not have immediate institutional "pay-off."

The training materials in the back of this Resource Workbook are designed to help develop these three necessary ingredients.

IV. The Larger Context of Theology & Ministry:

The approach to ministry suggested by this Resource Book and Training Course focuses on aiding older adults in congregations to assist the faith-development of young adults. This is not the answer to ministry, but is part of a larger picture, and it may be helpful to see where this ministry fits in the larger picture.

Ephesians 4:11-13 names five basic types of ministry. There are:

-The work of the Apostles, who call together the community of believers for teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers.

-The work of Evangelists, who share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who have not yet heard or received it.

-The work of Prophets, who discern the signs of the times and declare the intention of God.

-The work of Teachers and Pastors, who help believers grow in faith (the ministry of nurture).

-The work of Ministry, or Service to others which is the work of all the people of God.

The ministry of faith-development is part of the ministry of nurture (the work of teachers and pastors). While in the early years much of our ministry of nurture centers on teaching individuals the story and content of faith, in the young adult years nurture must help individuals struggle with the meaning of faith for themselves as individuals. It is part of the process of helping people grow in faith.

The usefulness of faith-development theory is that it helps us understand and nurture people at different stages of growth. By analogy, we look for bud, blossom, and fruit at the appropriate time. Faith-development theory speaks to the form, rather than the content of faith, and it can be used by people of various different theological positions.

However, Christian theology is distorted if theory is used as a ladder which people must climb. As desirable as growth is, no one is saved by growing up. All of us, infants, young and old are acceptable and saved solely by the grace of God. We can therefore accept and affirm individuals at every stage of development. We can nurture growth and respond appropriately, but growth, like life itself, is always a gift from God.

Of the five ministerial functions named above, congregations by their nature do the apostolic and nurturing tasks best, and our approach centers on the work of older adults with young adults in the ministry of nurture. However, as older adults get to know and care about young adults first hand, they may see their needs and be drawn to a ministry of service with or on behalf of young adults. Or, in having more contact with young adults, they get to know some who have not heard the Word, and have an opportunity to share their good news.

Involvement with students and young adults may also lead to greater involvement in the church's concern for higher education and issues of social justice. Howard Clinebell, author of Growth Counseling, suggests that people progress from personal liberation, to liberation of personal relationships, to concern for the liberation of social systems.

In my experience, one woman through a personal relationship with one international student in a host families program became concerned and involved in the whole issue of international education in the local college and community.

Not all of the church's ministry can be carried out by local congregations or by individuals. In the context of higher education, the prophetic and evangelical tasks may need to be performed by campus ministers who can speak the Word in an academic setting.

Ministries of service to meet human needs may be carried out through cooperative ventures with the colleges and other organizations. And particularly on residential campuses, there is a need for ministers to perform the apostolic task of calling into being communities of faith.

No one part of the body can do the work of the whole body, but the various parts can support one another in carrying out the work of the church.

To the reader:

Part II of Congregations, Students, and Young Adults contains resources for developing a congregationally-based ministry with students and other young adults.

The method of approach is to develop the awareness and ministry of older lay people in the congregation. To better understand this approach, and to gain a further understanding of the relationship of young adults to the church, you may wish to read through the lay ministry study course. (See pages A-1 through A-20 in Part II.)

The study course and other designs included in Part II were developed by the Commuter Student/Young Adult Ministry Project in work with local congregations around Washington, D.C. You may wish to adapt these for your own situation.

Bibliographic listings will be found in the "Further References" section at the back of the book.

PART II

Action Resources for Congregational Use

#1 - *A Lay Ministry Study Course* , "Faith Development in Young Adults"

LEADER'S GUIDE

PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL

#2 - Identifying Young Adults in Your Congregation

#3 - Designs for an Intergenerational Retreat

#4 - A Sermon Starter

Further References

-Sources, an annotated bibliography of brief books

-Study materials for groups

-Ministry with young adults, resources

-Relating the church and the campus, resources

#1 - A Lay Ministry Study Course

Faith · Development in Young Adults

LEADER'S GUIDE

This study course is intended for older lay people in a congregation.

Its purpose is to develop
UNDERSTANDING of young adults and their relationship to the church,

INVOLVEMENT of older adults with young adults in the church and in the community, and

SUPPORT for a new approach to young adult ministry by lay people and clergy.

The course may be used as a four-session unit in any ongoing church study group, such as a Sunday morning adult class; or

The course may be used with a group of people particularly concerned with this area of ministry.

PREPARATION

The course is divided into four sessions:

Session 1: What do we think about young adults?
Session 2: Young adults in transition
Session 3: Changes in faith
Session 4: Ministry with young adults

Materials:

Each participant should have a copy of the participant's book "A Lay Ministry Study Course: Faith-Development in Young Adults."

Time:

The course is planned for one-hour periods, with reading for participants to do between the sessions. If a longer period is available, the material may be read together in class.

While the basic course is designed for four weeks of study, additional material is provided to extend the course or to direct the group to some action possibilities.

Setting:

As the course involves discussion and some personal sharing, try to hold it in a place which is conducive to conversation.

Content:

All the necessary content is provided in the participant's book. However, the leader or leaders of the course should read the material in "Commuter, Students, and Young Adults," and if possible, "The Problem of Faith-Development in Young Adults." These resources will provide additional materials to draw on in group discussion.

Method:

The general method of the course is for participants to read the theoretical and informational material, and then relate their own experience to it through the learning exercises, discussion, and homework.

Directions for use of each of the four sessions is provided on the following two pages.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR THE FOUR SESSIONS

Each session is designed with some reading material for group discussion, a learning exercise, and suggested "homework" or things to do between sessions.

The actual use of the learning exercises is explained in each case, and they are relatively easy for participants to use. The main task of the leader will be to facilitate discussion, and at times help the group to move ahead with the task when the conversation gets far afield from the subject at hand.

Session 1.

Have participants introduce themselves to one another, and provide a general introduction to the course. The introductory material printed in Session 1 is brief and should be read over together by the class. If you are using the course in a one hour time frame, it will be necessary to move quickly to the learning exercise. Follow the directions given for the exercise, allowing discussion but moving the group along through the four questions. The important thing to draw out in this exercise is how individuals' perceptions of young adults are based on their various experiences. There are no "right" answers to these questions.

At the close of the session, draw the group's attention to the directions on page 4.

Session 2.

At the beginning of the session, check in with the group on the "homework." Was anyone more aware of young adults around them during the past week? Was it easy or hard to think of five young adults in the congregation?

Move on to the written material. Did everyone have an opportunity to read it? Did it generate some questions, or did anything stand out as particularly important?

Ask the participants to think of a young adult (other than themselves) and do the learning exercise. After everyone has had an opportunity to finish writing, ask if someone would be willing to share their example with the group. Does it illustrate the movement from Dependence to Independence to Interdependence? Does it raise questions about it? Does the model help to make sense of this particular journey? Ask another participant to share an example.

At the end of the session, look at the directions on page 8.

Session 3.

Check in with the group on the homework. Did anyone have any insights as a result of reflecting on their own lives as young adults?

Move on to the written material. Did the material provide any new insights? It may be helpful here to go at once to the learning exercise, and then come back to a discussion of the theory in the light of individuals' experience. What experience with searching faith have group members had as young adults, or presently?

Session 3, continued

Especially in the use of this learning exercise it may be important to remind group members of the importance of listening to one another, and the rule: "State, don't debate." It is important for group members to hear one another's experience rather than to judge it or discuss how things ought to be. The experience and journey of faith is different for each individual. Thank individuals for sharing their experience with the group.

At the end of the session, draw the attention of participants to the "homework" at the bottom of page 11.

Session 4

At the beginning of the session, ask if anyone had the opportunity of talking with a young adult. Was it a good experience? What are their thoughts about it?

Move on to the printed material. Start with the six principles for ministry on page 13 of the booklet. Have them read aloud, one at a time. If necessary, spend a few minutes clarifying the statement if there are questions. It is not necessary for everyone to agree with each statement, but participants should be clear about what is being said, and differences should be noted.

Move on to the material on page 14, and statement number seven. What experiences have people had which might illuminate that statement? Can individuals see themselves as ministers?

Allow time for people to fill out the last page and discuss it, particularly question four. What follow-up will there be with this group, if any?

Follow-up Session

Materials are provided in the participant's book for an optional follow-up session. This is particularly appropriate for use with a group which intends to be involved in ministry with young adults.

It is suggested that you initially have participants read and discuss the material, and then use the section "Thinking about your ministry" as a learning exercise. Have the participants write their responses, then discuss.

If the participants later decide that they wish to develop further contact with young adults or contexts for ministry within the congregation, see the suggestions given in sections 3 and 4, "Identifying young adults in your congregation" and "Designs for an intergenerational retreat."

SUGGESTIONS FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

If you are using this course in a previously established adult study group, perhaps you may not need to recruit participants. However, you may have a special concern for ministry with young adults, know some others who share this concern, and want to recruit a few others to explore this with you.

Ask people one by one. As with most programs in congregational life, the individual approach is the best. Notices may be inserted in bulletins or posted on bulletin boards to give people a general background. However, many people who are "naturals" for this kind of ministry may not think of themselves that way. As you think of people to ask, here are some general hints, nudges, observations, and suggestions to help start the wheels turning:

- -Are there some individuals who used to be very active in church life who are not presently? Often parents whose last child has left home become less active in church life, but have much to offer.

- -What about people new to your congregation who may be looking for some way to become involved with others?

- -Think about who in the congregation you would hold up as an example of quiet, "together" faith -- someone who may not talk about it much but who seems to know what he/she believes and carries it over into daily life.

- -Look for parents of young adults. One important motivation for people in this lay ministry is the personal agenda of wanting to improve their relationship with "their own" young adults.

- -Are there some older people who are students themselves, or faculty members?

- -Have you thought about the over-65 group who often have the wisdom and grace to share their experience with another generation.

A further suggestion. If you are planning to use this course as the starting point for developing a structured student or young adult ministry in your congregation, remember it is is easiest to recruit people for a definite time period. Ask people to be involved for the four sessions. Then, if they are interested in further involvement, you can negotiate that with them.

PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG ADULTS IN THE COURSE

The course is intended primarily for adults over thirty, but its purpose is not to plan ministry for young adults. Rather, we begin first with the idea that there be a firm base of older people to support and interpret this ministry before the congregation.

Second, it is important for older people to discover their own reasons and resources for being involved with young adults. Simply to ask, "What do they (young adults) want?" is often a way of disowning involvement.

Third, at this stage you are essentially training lay people to participate in a new and sometimes threatening ministry. Encourage them to move at their own pace.

However, it is not necessary to exclude all young adults from the course. Experience with this material has shown that when it is used in an open setting with both older and younger adults, some of the young adults have gained in terms of their own self-understanding.

If there is an existing separate group of young adults in your congregation, there can be opportunities later for both young and old to be involved together in planning, programs, and ministry. See the suggestions given in Section 3, "Designs for an intergenerational retreat."

Faith · Development in Young Adults

A Four-Session Course for Congregational Use

This course is intended for older lay people in congregations. Why? There are a variety of concerns that older adults have about young adults, as the following comments illustrate:

"I don't understand why these kids today can't settle down. You see these 24 year-olds who don't know what they're doing. It wasn't like that when I was young."

"I've got two boys that age and they won't have anything to do with the church."

"My son is living at home and it's hell for us."

"We want young people to come back into the congregation... it's not a complete body without them."

© Alban Institute, 1978

WHY THE CURRENT CONCERN FOR YOUNG ADULTS?

Parents have always had concern for their young adult children, and the community of faith has often been concerned about the "children of the saints" or the faith of the emerging generation. But in recent years, several societal changes have made young adults a larger concern on the agenda of many congregations.

1) There are more young adults now. The children of the baby boom years (1947-57) are now in the third decade of life.

2) Young adulthood has emerged as a distinct period of life. The general trend has been towards longer periods of training and "preparation for life" due to increased skill requirements in a technical society, and because our current affluence can afford and needs delayed entrance into the work force. Thus, like adolescence before, "young adulthood" is emerging as a distinct period of life.

3) Many young adults are staying single longer. While this has general acceptance in the society at large, it presents a challenge to church life which has been chiefly oriented towards families.

4) More young adults reside in local communities. There has been a rapid increase in commuter colleges and in non-college options. Rather than going away to college or the military where they might be the concern of the chaplain, more young adults are now living in the community and are the concern of the local congregation.

Introduction to learning exercise

As a starting point for this course, the following exercise will ask you to think about your relationship with young adults. Where do you have contact with young adults -- at home? at work? on a campus? Who comes to mind when you think about young adults? What do you think their concerns are and what do you think that they think about you?

Directions: Take a look at the following exercise and put a check mark next to your responses. You may check more than one response in each case, and write in your own answer if none of the responses fit.

After everyone in your group has had an opportunity to finish the exercise, share your responses. Taking one question at a time, go around the group, asking the members to share their answers and any further explanations or comments which they might wish to share.

LEARNING EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to elicit some of the different perspectives that we have about young adults. These are not questions with "right" answers, and you may check one or more responses to each.

1. When you are asked about young adults, who first comes to mind?

( ) College students
( ) Own or neighbors' children
( ) Young people at work
( ) High school graduates
( ) People or groups you have read about or seen on T.V.
( ) Young married couples
( ) Friends or colleagues
( ) Servicemen and women
( ) Young singles
( ) _____

2. The most important concern for young adults is...

( ) Getting away from home
( ) Finding a job
( ) Choosing a career
( ) Getting married
( ) Choosing a lifestyle
( ) Knowing what to believe
( ) Finding themselves
( ) Finding friends
( ) _____

3. The biggest problem for young adults today is...

( ) Lack of direction
( ) Having too many decisions
( ) Drugs
( ) Permissive parents
( ) Society
( ) Unwillingness to work at anything
( ) Dependence
( ) The economic climate
( ) Sex
( ) Disillusionment
( ) Apathy
( ) _____

4. I think that young adults generally think of older people as...

( ) People to look up to
( ) People who don't have much to offer them
( ) People who are interesting to talk to
( ) People who probably won't understand
( ) Parents or teachers
( ) Competitors
( ) Friends

HOMEWORK & FOLLOW-UP

IF YOUR GROUP IS MEETING IN ONE-HOUR SESSIONS, ask participants to read the material for Session 2 before the next session.

Things to do:

AS YOU GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS, be aware of where you see young adults in your community, at work, etc. Make a list of places where you see young adults.

IN YOUR CHURCH, try to identify five young adults by name. They may sing in the choir or teach Sunday School, or perhaps you don't see them at all. Maybe they are away at college or perhaps you know of someone living in the community who used to be active as a teenager.

Faith · Development in Young Adults

In the recent past, the passage of young adulthood could be understood through the stereotype of a young man who left home around age eighteen and by age thirty had "settled down" with a wife, two children, mortgage and membership in the PTA, local service club, and church. The intervening years might be marked by college, military service, and transitional jobs, but there was a fair degree of personal independence and mobility. The stereotypic woman remained within the parental orbit, or "marked time" in college or a job until marriage put her in a home of her own.

YOUNG ADULTS IN TRANSITION

As we use the term young adult, we generally mean someone between the ages of eighteen and thirty. But the age boundaries are very general. Young adulthood is a period of transition between the dependent state of childhood and the interdependent state of an adult who has assumed responsibility within a community, a profession, or a family.

This is a period of transition from Dependence through Independence to Interdependence. Young adults are generally free from the constraints of parents or major external responsibilities. The young adult who decides to go away for a vacation seldom needs to check with parents, arrange for a baby sitter or clear the desk a month in advance.

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Young adults are the most mobile segment of the population. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that those in the 22-24-year-old range change address more frequently than any others.

Young adults generally share a psychological as well as physical mobility. They can respond quickly to a spur-of-the-moment invitation, they are free to "go with the flow," and are able to form intense relationships quickly. Young adults are apt to become rapidly and whole-heartedly involved in a project, cause or major interest, and within a matter of months move on to something else. In contrast, older adults are apt to become involved more slowly and make commitments on a more limited, but long-term basis.

In young adulthood, one must establish one's place in society. This means giving up psychological and economic dependence upon one's parents. It means finding out what one believes for oneself. It means testing one's own abilities, interests, and self-concept against what is valued in the larger society. It means finding a consistent identity with peers and exploring the possibilities of intimacy. It means eventually accepting responsibility for one's decisions and commitments.

A major step in achieving independence from parents and a place in the larger society is made by getting a regular paying job. The ability to "do a day's work for a day's pay" has always been an indicator of adult status in society. Not too long ago, a boy, particularly from a farm family, might achieve this status at age fourteen. In our more complex technical society, a young man or woman may not have finished professional preparation until the late twenties.

Individuals frequently enter young adulthood full of great hopes and confidence. They can exasperate their elders by their seeming inability to understand

the failures, limitations, problems, and complexity of life. But for some young adults, limited affirmation by the world, rejection by others, failure of their self-concept, or inability to make the world personally meaningful can result in disaster. The leading causes of death among young adults are accidents and suicide.

Traditionally, societies have made room for experimentation and failure in the transition to adulthood. There has been some room for experimentation and transitional identities. Our residential colleges have been places where, apart from immediate consequence, one could learn, experiment, and test one's powers with the support of adult mentors and a community of peers.

Today, there are many roads to adulthood and many options for young adults. The transition from Dependence to Independence to Interdependence is seldom made smoothly and in all areas at once. One young adult quickly achieves economic independence while retaining unexamined ideals. An older, married graduate student may still be partially dependent on parents for economic support. Another, in pursuit of an ideological vision, assumes an early responsibility and interdependence with some segment of society. Another moves from one position to another in search of fulfilling work.

TRANSADULTHOOD

The Institute of Life Insurance recently developed a trend report on the life cycle in which they use a new descriptive term, "TRANSadulthood," to describe this transitional period of adulthood.

" 1) Transadulthood is a period of experimentation:

a) with differing life styles,
b) with all sorts of relationships, interpersonal, group and community,
c) with varieties of possible career and vocational choices,
d) with testing educational goals, being in and out of college, and changing majors while in college.

2) Personal freedoms and individuality are primary.

3) Responsibility is, or seems to be, secondary.

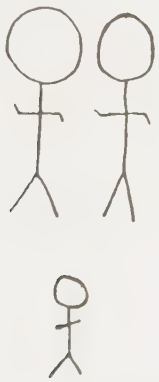
4) Options and opportunities are kept open and flexible.

5) Change is characteristic, frequent, spontaneous, and at times, idiosyncratic."

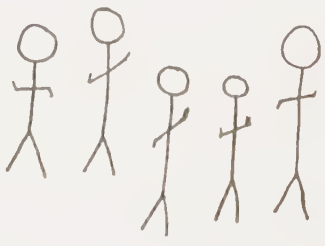
DEPENDENCE ——— INDEPENDENCE ——— INTERDEPENDENCE

(dependent relationships with parents)

(interdependent relationships and responsibility with equals)



a period of
relative
FREEDOM
MOBILITY
EXPERIMENTATION
TRANSITION



CHILDHOOD
(Pre-Adulthood)

EARLY ADULTHOOD

LEARNING EXERCISE - Session 2

This exercise is a means of thinking about specific individuals in terms of the transitions of adulthood. Follow the directions, and then, in your group, have the members tell briefly the story of the individual that they have been thinking of. As you hear the stories, you will get a composite picture of young adult development. Look at those places where you see movements toward independence and interdependence.

The external marks of this transition are observable events, milestones marking the relationship of the individual to family, school, job, peers, and community. In one life, those milestones might form a progression such as the following:

graduation from high school
age of voting
leaving home
attending college
college graduation
transitional job
marriage
first child born
first career position

OR

graduation from high school
leaving home
service in the Armed Forces
discharge
period of unemployment
vocational training
period of employment
first career position
promotion and move

Few lives are marked by direct progressions from dependence to interdependence. There are periods of inactivity, movements back to dependence, and leaps forward. Think of this movement in the life of someone you know, and note below the milestones of his/her life since age seventeen.

HOMEWORK & FOLLOW-UP:

IF YOU ARE USING THE COURSE IN A ONE-HOUR TIME PERIOD, you will need to read the material for Session 3 before the next session.

WHEN YOU ARE ALONE, think back to the major milestones in your own life as you moved from Dependence to Independence to Interdependence. Write them down. What were significant transitions for you? What was different about becoming an adult then, and now? Were you different as a young adult from the way you are now?

What people were important to you in that period of your life? Write them down.

* * * * * * * *

BOOKS for further reading:

THE ADULT YEARS by Wilbur Bradbury
Time-Life Books, New York

PASSAGES by Gail Sheehy
E.P. Dutton, New York

THE SEASONS OF A MAN'S LIFE by Daniel J. Levinson
Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Faith · Development in Young Adults

SESSION 3

CHANGES IN FAITH

As young adults move from dependence to independence, a similar change often takes place in their faith. The beliefs derived from parents, early teaching, community values and the example of others must be looked at critically, weighed, and sorted through. One needs an understanding of life, a faith, which is one's own.

Many young people begin by questioning religious beliefs and dropping out of church activities before the time of leaving home. The process is intensified in young adulthood. Surveys consistently indicate that a minority of young adults are actively involved with churches, but a majority are concerned with religious questions. In a recent survey conducted by the Gallup Poll, 80% of the young adults questioned said that their religious beliefs were important to them, but only 26% were regular church attenders.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH

John H. Westerhoff, III of the Duke University Divinity School has given us a convenient way of talking about the way faith develops. In Will Our Children Have Faith? he speaks of faith growing like the rings of a tree in four concentric circles. He calls the four styles:

EXPERIENCED FAITH,
AFFILIATIVE FAITH,
SEARCHING FAITH, and
OWNED FAITH.

Each style tends to be dominant at a certain period of life.

If we think of these for a moment as developmental stages, we can say that Experienced faith develops earliest. In the first six years of life the child learns through touch and experience to trust parental figures, the world, and God. The religious experience of children is often very fresh and personal.

Affiliative faith develops in the school years during which we learn the story and the rules of our community. We learn who our people are, we learn to belong. At school we say the Pledge of Allegiance and at Sunday school hear the Bible stories. We derive a sense of who we are from affiliation with the community.

In the later teenage years, as independence and personal identity develop, there follows a period of Searching faith, marked by questioning, experimentation, acting over against the community, and commitments to various ideologies and causes.

On this base of experience, affiliation and personal searching, an Owned faith may develop in the form of a more personal, integrated stance which is not based solely on the beliefs of the community. Owned faith is marked by a willingness to make commitments, and may lead the individual to make a new commitment to the church.

But faith is not simply a matter for "grown-ups" nor is faith ever final. The four styles of faith can all be sincere, and deep, and real. We all continue to need to experience the reality of God, to affiliate with others on the basis of shared beliefs; we continue to search and question as well as to make commitments on the basis of what we most deeply believe.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Campus ministers have often observed in students a period of "suspended belief" in which all that one has previously been taught is "held at arm's length" and sorted through.

This observation is supported by a Lutheran study of church-related people which indicates that those between the ages of 19 and 23 have the lowest level of congregational participation; the least desire for rigid and unchanging social structures, absolutist religious stances or claims of having "the Truth;" the least need to be socially distant from persons who differ religiously or socially, and the highest levels of participation in what the study calls "questionable personal activities."

As we might expect, these tendencies are more pronounced when young adults leave home. Those who live in college dormatories more quickly drop religious behaviors such as going to church. The intellectual development in the college years tends to foster the critical examination of belief. But even among those who remain in their home communities we can see a movement from uncritical acceptance of belief to a period of questioning, exploration, and a more private religious concern.

The searching period is important for students, by whatever name it is called. A national survey routinely asks entering college freshmen to identify their goals. Over two-thirds consistently say that "discovering a philosophy of life" is a major goal.

The search for meaning may look at times like rejection of belief. But the student who seeks out a minister to challenge with the statement, "I don't believe in God" is basically asking a question and engaging in a profound search.

In general, the faith of young adults is marked by questioning of values and religion, experimentation, and exploratory commitments to various causes and ideologies. The value of a developmental perspective is in seeing these activities as a positive form of faith, one that is necessary for a more inclusive and personal adult commitment. But there are many roads that people take.

Some young adults retain an affiliative style of faith longer than others. They may simply be developing more slowly in their search for a personal identity; others may never have had their affiliative needs satisfactorily met; and others may retain the outward forms of affiliation while struggling intellectually with their faith.

Particularly for married young adults, the saying "They'll come back when they're thirty" has a measure of truth to it. Some young married couples with children do return to the church. But pastors say that frequently they return to recapture for their children their own experience, rather than on the basis of a committed faith.

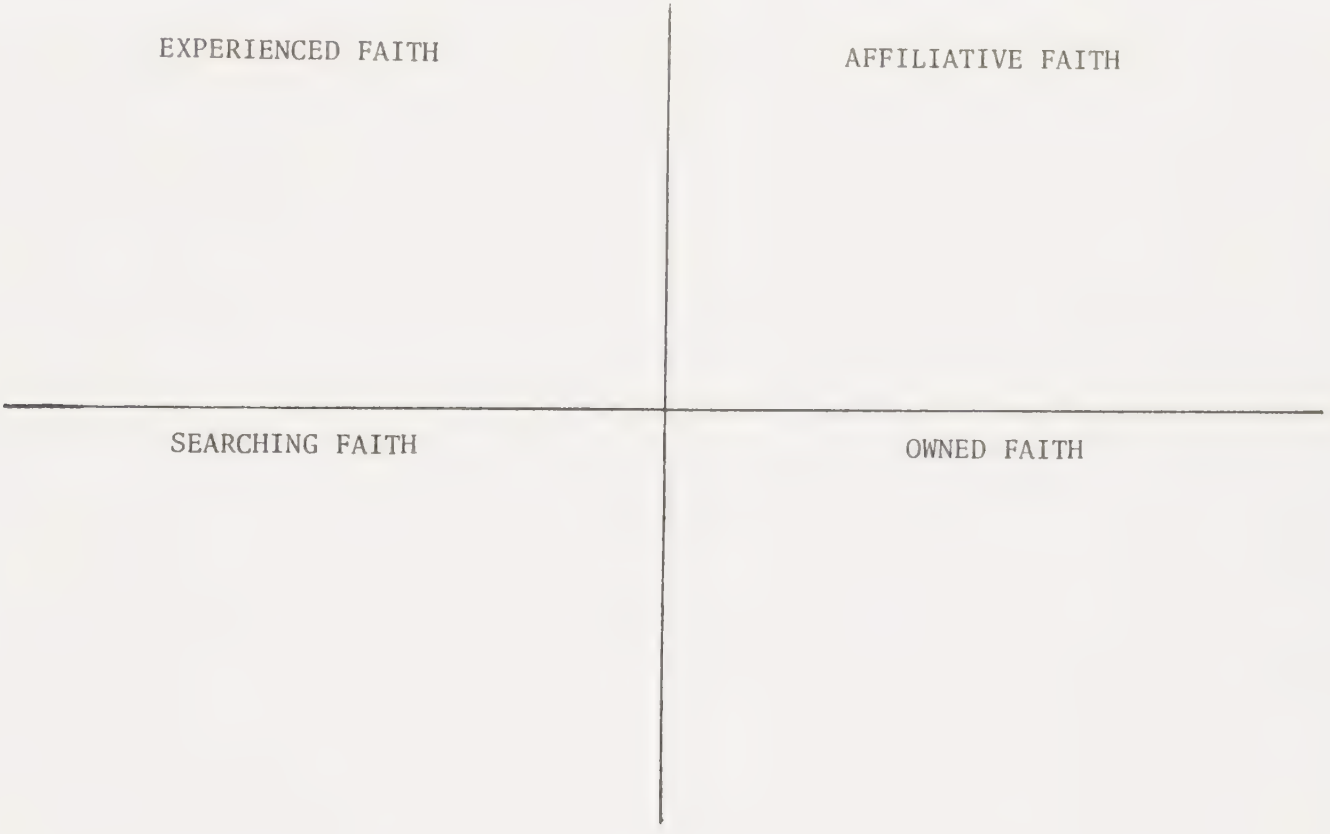
A minority of young adults are attracted to groups which seem to offer certainty and support. The cult groups offer a clear-cut view in a confusing world. They also offer the individual a sense of place and belonging over against the loneliness described as a problem by many young adults.

The most common pattern of development is for young adults to drop out of church affiliation in the teenage years. Childhood belief seems outgrown, but there is not yet a commitment to take its place. The individual experiments with a new-found freedom and tests alternative life-styles and beliefs. This may lead to commitment, or if the search is too frightening or unproductive, he or she may withdraw from the search, finding a limited comfort and significance provided by career, family, and friends.

LEARNING EXERCISE - Session 3

Think about your own life in terms of the four styles of faith discussed. Are there examples of Experienced faith (trust), Affiliative faith (belonging), Searching faith (questioning), and Owned faith (commitment)?

Try to think of an example of each style of faith in your own past history or in your present experience. Make a note of each example with a few words in the grid below. In your study group, describe one of these examples from your own experience, and listen carefully to the experience of others.



(ALTERNATIVE: If you wish, or if you have difficulty with the four categories, take a plain piece of paper and draw a timeline or picture of your life, noting in particular the significant events which shaped your religious pilgrimage and your relationship with the church.)

Think about your church. To which of these "styles of faith" does it generally appeal?

HOMEWORK & FOLLOW-UP:

IF YOUR GROUP IS MEETING IN ONE-HOUR SESSIONS, read the material for Session 4 before your next meeting.

DURING THE WEEK, "interview" a young adult. Think of someone whom you know in your neighborhood, congregation, campus, or work. Make an opportunity to talk. You might tell them that you are doing this course at your church and are interested in their perspective. Try to listen as much as possible. As you have listened to one another in this class, try to hear where the other person is, how s/he sees things, rather than thinking about what s/he ought to be or do.

Faith · Development in Young Adults

SESSION 4

MINISTRY WITH YOUNG ADULTS

Seeing the mobility and transitional nature of young adulthood, and the searching, experimental quality of its characteristic faith style, it should not surprise us that we see few young adults as regular members of a local congregation.

The affiliative style of faith sees belonging to a congregation as of primary importance; and those in whom owned faith predominates may make a commitment to a community as a way of living out the faith. But searching faith, or the "wilderness journey," tends to be individualistic by its very nature.

It is also critical, and critical in the negative sense, as young adults generally tend to judge the institutions of their society by idealistic standards. In the Dayton Young Adult Survey, the respondents indicated some of the ways in which they felt the church (or organized religion) was failing to do the job it should. These responses emerged:

" 1. Fails to meet the needs of people
2. Apathetic, uninspired
3. Too materialistic, too preoccupied with money
4. Out-of-date, out of touch with reality
5. Not reaching young people
6. Too many hypocrites; too smug; not having true faith
7. Not digging into the real problems facing humankind. "

Ministry with young adults is also made difficult by the practical problems created by the mobility and transiency of young adults. Too, the dress and lifestyle of young adults may not be acceptable to older members of a congregation, and their ideas are sometimes threatening or disruptive.

Many congregations attempt to create a young adult group, but this is rarely successful. Most often, those young adults who are attracted are those with strong affiliative needs and those who are acting out "little adult" roles. Other young adults are "turned off" or simply not interested in this kind of affiliation. There are few concerns or interests which would draw together the whole spectrum of the diverse young adult years.

Even where there have been "successful" young adult programs there is often some disappointment and frustration on the part of the rest of the congregation because the young adults do not attend services or otherwise support the congregational program. It is felt that these programs simply do not "pay off."

It is unfortunate that the development of searching faith in an individual is so often seen as a failure on the part of parents or pastors. When young people begin to search or experiment, the desire of many people is to "get them back" into the church. But young adults often feel this desire as a pressure to draw them back to a world of dependence and second-hand identity. We need to help young adults forward through searching faith.

The following six principles of ministry summarize what we have been saying. In your group, read each statement and attempt to clarify any questions about it. You might ask whether your own experience supports the statement or not.

PRINCIPLES FOR MINISTRY

1) Ministry with young adults needs to take into consideration the special nature of these years. The behavior we expect of young adults is neither that of settled adults nor that of compliant children.

2) The characteristics of independence, questioning, search, and experimentation are common to almost all young adults at some point in their transition to adulthood. It is development which needs to be expected and affirmed.

3) Some young adults will retain a dependent style of faith longer than others. When it is necessary for an individual, it should not be rejected, but neither should it be affirmed as the only or normative style of faith.

4) Responsible young adult ministries will not "pay off" in terms of greatly increased attendance or giving. Motivation for such ministries must therefore be found in long range insititutional goals, in our own need to share our lives, and in our concern for the next generation.

5) The church may exercise a ministry on behalf of young adults by helping to meet their needs which are not being adequately met in the community. We do this out of our concern for others, not to "get them in."

6) Not all young adults fit together. The specific transitions of college/non-college, singe/married, home/away create different needs and different opportunities for ministry. We need also to distinguish between ministry with those who in some sense are already attached to the church and ministries to the general non-church young adult population.

When we speak of ministry in the church, we are most likely to think of the ordained minister, or to think in terms of church programs. But young adults, for a number of reasons, are not attracted by programs. And programs do not seem to be the best way of nurturing the individual in his or her solitary pilgrimage of searching faith. What is needed for the individual is one-to-one contact.

Some pastors in congregations and on campus have periodic one-to-one contact with young adults. It is not an uncommon experience for a pastor to have a young adult drop by to talk for an hour or so and then be off again for a year or so. But this experience need not be limited to the clergy, and many young adults will not seek out a pastor. This is a ministry which older lay people can perform for young adults and for themselves.

What is the special nature of this relationship and what can we offer young adults? We cannot give young adults "the answers" and in many ways even our experience is not useful to them. One thing that we know for certain in our changing world is that the future will not be like the past.

What we can offer is acceptance as an adult. A colleague of mine relates that it was a significant event for him when he first received a letter from an older adult which was signed with the writer's first name. As non-parental adults, we can welcome the young, who struggle for a place, into the adult

community. Such acceptance, of course, must reflect a genuine personal acceptance and a willingness to take seriously the problems, concerns, dreams, and visions of the other.

We can also challenge young adults. As accepting, non-parental persons, we can question and disagree without being heard to say, "You are wrong." Again, such activity needs to be based on a true, non-judgmental attitude. A relationship of equality implies that we ourselves must be open to being questioned, challenged, and changed in the encounter. The combination of challenge in an atmosphere of acceptance is basic in promoting human growth, and it is a reflection of the way we grow, encountering the grace and judgment of God.

Third, we can offer an example of living faith. What is needed by the young is not a pattern to copy, but a living assurance that adulthood with integrity is possible. (Perhaps an answer to the question, "Is there life after thirty?")

Several authors have written of the need for adult mentors, and guarantors of identity. Young adults need someone to believe in them and in what they will become. They need an opportunity to see beyond the roles of parent, teacher, co-worker, or church goer to see the possibility of an individual living with the complexities of life -- living with questions and convictions, taking the risks of both openness and commitment in faith.

A final principle for group discussion:

7) Ministries with young adults need to focus on the individual and his/her growth as a responsible person in faith. This can be done through significant intergenerational contact with other adults who are willing to share their convictions without judging others.

A CONCLUDING EXERCISE:

1) Where do you presently have contact with young adults? Would you like to have more contact?

2) What might you have to offer young adults? What might they offer to you?

3) As you think of your possible ministry with young adults, is there any further help you might want from other members of this study group from your church?

4) What have you received through this course that has changed your attitude, that you might act on, or that you want to think about some more?

FOLLOW-UP

After you have used the four-session course "Faith-Development in Young Adults" you or your group may wish to continue involvement in ministry with young adults. This section includes some thinking about what ministry is, and some initial suggestions for individual and group ministry.

PLANNING FOR

MINISTRY WITH YOUNG ADULTS

The Ministry of Jesus

One of the places we look to understand "ministry" is the ministry of Jesus. We have talked about faith as expressed in four stages, or styles, and we might look at the ministry of Jesus through this particular set of glasses.

For example, when Jesus says to Simon and Andrew, "Follow me," he is calling forth a commitment; he does it in another way when he asks, "Whom do you say that I am?"

In a number of other places, we see Jesus asking for a personal decision, calling forth commitment, setting hard choices.

But he ministers in other ways as well. Much of his ministry can be understood as providing the direct immediate experience of God's gracious care through his own presence. We certainly see this in his healing of people, his going out to and being with the outcasts of society, his calling the little children to himself and being with them; he is the good shepherd. The experience of God through the presence of Jesus is so important that it is an article of professed belief with us.

Jesus also ministered through ways that we would associate with affiliative faith. He did not just minister to individuals, he gathered together a community of people. He taught. Particularly he taught his disciples to pray, he gave some new interpretations of the law, he gave a new commandment. He spoke about what kind of behavior was appropriate for people who wanted to be members of his kingdom.

We also see Jesus promoting searching faith, particularly in reference to the established affiliative forms of Judaism. Jesus asked many questions and provoked many questions. One outstanding example, of course, is the dialogue with Nicodemus. In John's Gospel, we see part of the effect later when Nicodemus is involved in the burial of Jesus. (But it is characteristic of searching faith that frequently we don't see the effects of ministry to searching faith.) For example, when Jesus challenges some of the Pharisees to break out of their narrow interpretation of the Sabbath law to a larger vision, I wonder what long term effect that had on some of them? Frequently, Jesus plants questions. It is more than a rhetorical device when he says, "What thinkest thou?"

One final example from the ministry of Jesus involves several of these styles of ministry and is particularly appropriate to our study of ministry with young adults. It is the story of the rich young man who came to see Jesus, searching, who asks, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus responded first to the searching with another question, "Why do you call me good?" Then he says, "You know the commandments."

The young man had a strong background in affiliative faith; he replies, "I have observed all these things from my youth up; what is still missing from my life?"

Mark says, "And Jesus looking upon him loved him..." And Jesus tries to call him to a commitment. "Go sell what you have, give to the poor and follow me." The young man in this case was not ready, and went away sorrowful.

Even Jesus in his ministry was not always"successful." We might note, only partially in jest, that Jesus did not sponsor a program, and that after three years' work there were not many in his group.

Ministry is not program. As we have seen briefly in examples from the ministry of Jesus, there are many ways to minister. But in many of our congregations, we tend to feel that we must have a program, or we are not doing ministry. Particularly as we think about young adults, our first response is often to think that we must have a young adult group. But as we have seen, not all young adults fit together naturally, and the style of searching faith characteristic of many young adults does not tend towards group affiliation. Because searching faith is a pilgrimage of the individual, much of our ministry must be one-to-one.

The programs, Sunday school classes, and weekly attendance which are so much a part of our congregational life tend to minister best to the affiliative style of faith. We need to find new ways to minister with those to whom affiliation is not as important.

Ministry is not evaluated solely by results. We tend to think of "success" in terms of numbers. "How many people are in your group?" But in terms of ministry, it may be more important to ask how the lives of those involved were affected. Is there growth and new awareness? Have people experienced grace and forgiveness and healing? Have individuals been able to accept more responsibility for themselves and others?

Even these results may not be visible. Especially with young adults we often do not see the results of our work for years, if at all.

Therefore we often need to evaluate what we have done in terms of our own experience. For example, do we feel good about what we have done? Have we acted with integrity and care; have we been faithful to ourselves and to the Gospel; have we ministered to others as we would have them minister to us?

Ministry is not manipulation. The question is often asked "What can we do to attract young adults or to get them in?" In response, we need to ask, "Why do we want to get them in?" Is it for their benefit or for ours? What do we want to do with them once we have attracted them? We might attract young adults with gimmicks (or a rock band). We might find some other means to manipulate them into participation. But such approaches fail to respect the integrity of young adults or our own integrity and in the long run have negative results.

Ministry is not impersonal. Personal involvement with others can be threatening, and we often avoid it, without even being aware of our own motivation. In general, impersonal approaches to ministry are ineffective. When we send out a flyer, or make an annoucement, we may be providing information, but not ministry. My experience has been that very few people attend anything because they received a flyer. In one recent experience, over 1,000 Episcopal young adults were sent a flyer and not one responded. However, from a small sample, one-third responded to a personal invitation.

Ministry is...

Ministry is concerned with people, and proceeds from who we are.

Ministry proceeds from who we are as Christians, and therefore what we do is Christian ministry whether or not the name of Jesus is said. Ministry proceeds from our care and concern for others which is the basis for our wanting to be involved with them at all.

Ministry affirms the worth of other people where they are. (This does not necessarily mean approval of everything they are doing.) Ministry involves "loving without strings." This is very different from trying to get other people to do what we want.

Because ministry is personal, most ministry is with other people. It happens when we are involved with others deeply, when we care about others, when we are willing to share our lives and who we are with one another.

Some ministry, however, is ministry on behalf of others. When we act to alleviate poverty or help the handicapped we are often engaged in concern for others expressed in an indirect way. In the area of young adult ministry, we may engage in ministry on behalf of young adults through concern for colleges or other institutions which affect their lives.

Thinking about your ministry:

* You are probably already engaged in ministry with young adults. Think about where you have contact with young adults in your congregation, at work, in your neighborhood, at home, or maybe on a college campus.

* Think about your ministry. What does it presently lack, or what do you long for in your ministry?

* What support do you find for your ministry? What do you need?

Talk about these questions in your group. It may be that in your congregation the best way to minister with young adults in through individual acts of care and concern. This can be done through your daily activity or more intentionally through occasionally writing a letter, inviting someone to dinner, or introducing yourself to newcomers in the congregation. Some members of the study group may wish to meet together periodically to talk about their ministry. This can provide mutual accountability and support.

A group approach to ministry

Finally, and only after a variety of attempts at personal ministry have been made, you may decide that you want to take some action together as a group.

Some congregations have built the relationship between generations in their congregations by planning occasional events involving both young and older adults. The purpose of this approach is not to create a program for young adults but to create a context, a climate in which members of various generations can share their faith and their journeys.

If you use this approach to ministry, there are several points to be kept in mind.

1) Don't try to do everything at once. Plan a small project, a single step. It should be manageable and "do-able." (One congregation intended to contact all its young adults, found that there were too many, and finally focused on the 18 and 19 year-olds.) Keep it simple.

2) Be as specific as possible. (One congreagation set a goal of having personal contact with each young adult by the end of the year but did not set any intermediate goals. A more specific goal would be to contact ten young adults each month.)

3) Set goals in terms that are not dependent on external events. (For example, you can't plan to have twenty people attend an event. You can plan to invite twenty people. Again, you can't plan to have the governing board do something but you can plan to ask them.)

4) What you plan should be based on your own interests and what you want to do. When we get talked into doing something that we don't want to do or are not interested in, very often nothing gets done; worse yet, our reluctance is communicated to others. Focus on that group of young adults which is of greatest concern for you, and plan to do something which interests you. If you are working with others, accept responsibility for that part of the work you feel most comfortable doing.

5) Evaluate what you have done in terms of the overall goals of your ministry, and the goals of ministry that have been discussed earlier. (Warning: It is very easy at this point to again evaluate in terms of numbers and continuing program.)

Consider:

Have any lives been touched?

Has the care and concern of the church been communicated?

Have young adults been affirmed in their search and in the development of their faith?

ADDITIONAL COPIES of
"A Lay Ministry Study Course;
Faith-Development in Young Adults"
are available from the Alban Institute.

The course participant's book includes these pages (A1 - A20) in a convenient booklet for class use.

Cost for 10 or more copies is $1.50 each. Single copies $2.00. Please add 95¢ per order for handling. No postage is charged on pre-paid orders.

COMMUTER STUDENT/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY PROJECT

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#2 - Identifying Young Adults in Your Congregation

The lay ministry study course emphasizes the importance of contact between older and younger adults. This contact and ministry can take place anywhere. At home, at work, on the campus, or in church. But frequently the contact within congregations has been broken. The following process was designed to help a group of older adults begin to personally identify young adults in their congregation.

Materials: Each participant should have at least five cards, 4 x 6.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1

On a 4 x 6 card, write down the name of a young adult whom you know in your congregation. Leave room for an address and phone number. (You can fill in the address and phone now if you know them.)

What other general information do you know about this person? Living with parents or independently? Employed? Attending college? Involved in some church activity? Married? Note this information on the card.

STEP 2

Now, using one card for each individual, write down the names of some other young adults in your congregation whom you may not know as well.

STEP 3

During the next two weeks, we will try to find out a bit more about some of the young adults that we have identified. Right now, in the training session we will be concerned with two planning tasks.

ACTION PROCESS (Homework)

First, how do we go about gathering more information about these individuals, and why?

Second, if we are having a hard time identifying young adults in our congregation, how do we expand our basic list of possible contacts?

THE PURPOSES of your being involved in some personal data-gathering at this point are:

1) TO EXPAND YOUR PERSONAL CONTACTS with young adults. You are creating a list of young adults whom you personally know something about.

2) TO LEARN. By finding out more about some specific individuals you will also learn more about the diversity of young adult life-situations in general.

3) TO HELP YOUR CONGREGATION build a list of young adults who are known and who may be involved in some future ministry with young adults.

4) TO MINISTER. As you talk to individuals out of your concern for young adults you are doing more than gathering information. Your call expresses the concern and interest of the congregation.

WHEN YOU CALL SOMEONE, or speak to him or her in person, identify yourself, and say that you are a member of a group in your congregation that is concerned about your congregation's ministry with young adults. Simply explain that you are in the process of trying to gather some information about young adults who have been related to the congregation, and ask if they might help you.

For some further suggestions, see the page MAKING INFORMATION CALLS, A GUIDE. If you have time, your small group might want to role-play the situation of someone making such a call.

EXPANDING YOUR LIST. Many young adults who are in some way affiliated with your congregation will not be immediately known to you or to your small group. Or perhaps you are new to all this and don't know many young adults. On the next page you will find some specific suggestions for expanding your list of young adults affiliated with your congregation.

IN YOUR SMALL GROUP:

-Share the names you have through of. Remove any duplication of names.
-Plan to make some information calls during the next two weeks.
-You may plan to expand your list, using the next page.
-OR, you may wish to role-play a telephone call.

EXPANDING YOUR LIST

There are a number of ways to find further names of young adults in your congregation. One of course is to ask the young adults whom you know already. Another way is to check your congregational directory or card file - often it has been found that the children listed with congregational families in the records have grown up and become young adults - in checking records, remember that someone born in 1959 will be 18 in 1977. Another way to gather the names of young adults is to ask people who have recently worked with a senior high group, or who have worked in other ways with young adults. Some young adults may be church school teachers or members of the choir.

Below is a list of some activities to help you gather the names of young adults affiliated with your congregation. On the right hand side is a space to write in the names of whoever in your group volunteers to undertake that activity. Not all will be appropriate for your congregation. and you may think of others.

Now, in your group, plan what you will do to enlarge your list of young adults.

ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY YOUNG ADULTS	INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE
-talk to ministers	_____
-ask Church School coordinator and/or teachers	_____
-check congregational directory or file	_____
	_____
-look at record of marriages for recent years	_____
-ask youth group leaders	_____
-put announcement in bulletin for young adults and/or parents of students	_____
-check record of confirmations, adult baptisms, new memberships for appropriate past years.	_____
-make an announcement in church	_____
_____	_____

Who in the group will be responsible for coordinating these activities? _____

Phone number _____

MAKING INFORMATION CALLS, A GUIDE

The following memo was prepared by a ministry group in one congregation which was in the process of identifying young adults affiliated in some way with the congregation. The ministry group was working from a list of names which was out-of-date, and they were making some calls to learn where these young adults were now. Some of their suggestions may be helpful to you.

ALL SAINTS' TELEPHONE CALL GUIDE

As an initial project the Young Adult Action/Study Group is planning to gather some basic data on young adults in the 18 to 21 year-old age bracket.

The basic information that we need at this point is the current address, telephone number, and status. That is, are they away at shcool, attending college locally, or working full time.

In addition, the phone calls to gather this data will communicate the basic fact that there is a concerned group at All Saints. We also expect that there will be some feedback or pastoral information to which we will listen and make notes.

Each member of the YA Action/Study Group will need to make around 19 calls. As a first step, we are asking each member of the group to make ten calls, and then contact the group coordinator.

The following are suggested as some sample dialogues:

1. "Hello, I'm-----from All Saints' Church. We're trying to gather some information about our young adults. Is NAME there?

2. (If NAME is living away) "Well, we would like to know about those who are living away, too.

3. (Or, if NAME is not home) "I just need some basic information. Could you help me?

4. "I'm a member of a group of adults at All Saints Church who are concerned about young adults, and we are gathering some information at this point.

5. "What is his/her current address? (Also, what is the phone number?)

6. (If response from a parent is "They're not interested," don't take "no" for an answer the first time. Parents don't always know about their children.) "We know that many young adults are not interested, but it would help us to have a current address.

7. (At some point, we would like to know status -- are they working full-time or in college.) "Are you working full-time or going to school?

8. If there is negative feedback about the church, try not to be defensive, but listen to it and make a note of it. Parents may be defensive about the fact that their children are not interested in the church. You might want to assure them that they are not alone. Any comments about the status of the young adult may be of importance, and it would be useful to make a note of it.

9. Thank them for their time.

The purpose of your call is:

A. To gather data: current address, phone number, status.

B. To communicate the fact that there is a group in the church interested in young adults.

C. To minister by non-judgmental listening and interest. To use feedback and pastoral information for future ministry.

3 - Resources for intergenerational retreats

Lay people in congregations can be involved in ministry with students and other young adults, and the encounter between young and old is often mutually enriching. However, sometimes a context, a setting, where there is mutual respect and time to get to know one another is necessary to set the encounter in motion.

One lay ministry study group did this quite simply on a Sunday morning. The study group invited the graduating high school seniors to meet with them. Together they watched a filmstrip, "Rites of Passage: Initiations to Adulthood." Then, in small groups with equal numbers of young and old, they discussed their own concepts of what it means to be an adult in our society.

Another group of older lay people have twice gone on weekend retreats with students and other young adults from their congregation. On the following pages you will find some of the designs which they used to explore faith together, and a description of how these designs were used.

Overall, there were four key ingredients which made these retreats successful and a positive experience for all involved:

1) The older adults took the initiative, committed themselves to go, and personally invited the young adults.

2) There was some structure to start the conversation going around topics of mutual concern in the small groups.

3) The older adults were willing to be open, share their own lives, and listen to others.

4) There was an atmosphere set of acceptance and openness to many different styles of faith.

These designs come from two retreats held in 1977 by the Young Adult Ministry Group at All Saints Episcopal Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Both retreats were planned to be "intergenerational," involving both young adults and other adults.

The Young Adult Ministry Group was made up primarily of older adults concerned about their ministry, and the ministry of All Saints' with young adults. The Ministry Group took the responsibility of planning the retreat arrangements and making personal contact with young adults in the congregation to invite them to participate. The retreat designs were proposed by the Rev. Robert Gribbon, tested on the planning group which included young adults, and adapted in consultation with them.

Neither retreat went exactly as planned The design elements given here are those that were actually used and which were most helpful in promoting the intergenerational communication for which the weekends were held. In addition to the designs, common meals, recreation, singing, prayer, and worship added much to the experience.

The June "Intergenerational Fellowship Weekend" was held in Bethany Beach, Delaware. The conference did not get under way Friday night, but the participants witnessed together a serious traffic accident near the conference center. However, even this common experience did not promote much intergenerational dialogue.

Saturday morning, older and young adults shared the learning exercise 2A-2B in groups of five or six. Within the 45 minutes allowed for this exercise, most groups did not get beyond question 3 on the first page.

Next, individuals were given a blank sheet of paper and asked to do a personal timeline or life story. This task was briefly modeled for the group and participants moved into it easily. This exercise was shared in the small groups and it appears that serious intergenerational sharing began at this point. The sharing of life stories was reported as a very positive experience for both young adults and older adults.

Present at the conference facility were an equal number of high school seniors on retreat, also from All Saints Church. We were sharing facilities and meals but not program with this group. Saturday night however, we planned to have a common activity with this group. A projector broke down, so we modified the program.

New small groups were formed including older adults, younger adults, and high school seniors. Learning exercise 2A-2B was used again. This was reported as a very positive experience for all, especially for the high school seniors for whom open dialogue with adults in a group was a new experience. The young adults reported new insights upon seeing themselves both in relationship to the high schoolers as well as to the other adults present.

The high degree of communication and good feeling was carried over to the Bible study used Sunday morning and a common celebration of Holy Communion on the beach.

The "Faithstyles" retreat was held in November at a camp facility near Washington. The nearby location resulted in a number of participants coming for only part of the weekend, and the facilities were a bit primitive for the older adults. We found, however, that a number of commuter students participated in this retreat, and perhaps the nearby location was an advantage for this group.

On Friday evening a film, "Awareness," was used as a common beginning experience. This film about Buddhism did serve the purpose of opening up new possible ways of thinking about faith, but not much interpersonal discussion was generated.

The "Getting to know you" games were used Saturday morning and worked well in the intergenerational setting. Participants were asked to move around in relation to a continuum on the floor to indicate their responses. The exercise demonstrated that individuals shared many interests across generational lines, and in no case was there a clear division of interests between the young and older adults.

Participants responded with enthusiasm to a presentation on the four styles of faith, following the Westerhoff schema. The grid exercise (#3 Faith-Development) was used and shared in small groups. In most cases this generated intergenerational sharing of faith concerns.

In the afternoon we tried a game and some discussion of "Where you are in relation to the church" but this did not work well. People seemed inarticulate about their relation to the church and why they go or don't go.

In the evening the Faithstyles exercise #3 "I believe" generated the most interest and excitement. Participants were asked to check their responses and share them with one another in self-selected trios. All trios were intergenerational. It was thought that this would be a brief exercise, but participants wanted to go on and on with it.

One of the important learnings from the Faithstyles #3 exercise was the affirmation of diversity which was experienced. In general the major benefits of the whole retreat to those who attended were reported as the increased awareness of themselves, the importance of God in their lives, and the excitement of Christian sharing. Two personal comments of note made by participants were:

..."the freedom to be free"

..."Mixed ages have much to offer each other in a context of equality, acceptance and friendship."

LEARNING EXERCISE # 2A

The purpose of this exercise is to elicit some of the different perspectives that we have about young adults. These are not questions with "right" answers, and you may check one or more responses to each.

1. When you are asked about young adults, who first comes to mind?

( ) College students ( ) Young married couples

( ) Own or neighbors' children ( ) Friends or colleagues

( ) Young people at work ( ) Servicemen and women

( ) High school graduates ( ) Young singles

( ) People or groups you have read about or seen on T.V.

( ) _____

2. The most important concern for young adults is...

( ) Getting away from home ( ) Choosing a lifestyle

( ) Finding a job ( ) Knowing what to believe

( ) Choosing a career ( ) Finding themselves

( ) Getting married ( ) Finding friends

( ) _____

3. The biggest problem for young adults today is...

( ) Lack of direction ( ) Dependence

( ) Having too many decisions ( ) The economic climate

( ) Drugs ( ) Sex

( ) Permissive parents ( ) Disillusionment

( ) Society ( ) Apathy

( ) Unwillingness to work at anything

( ) _____

4. I think that young adults generally think of older people as...

( ) People to look up to

( ) People who don't have much to offer them

( ) People who are interesting to talk to

( ) People who probably won't understand

( ) Parents or teachers ( ) Competitors ( ) Friends

LEARNING EXERCISE # 2B

The purpose of this exercise is to elicit some of the different perspectives that we have about older adults, people thirty-five and older. There are no "right" answers, and you may check one or more responses to each.

1. When you are asked about older adults, who first comes to mind?

( ) My parents ( ) Friends and colleagues

( ) Teachers or supervisors ( ) The people in charge

( ) Senior citizens ( ) Grandparents

( ) _____

2. The most important concern for older adults is....

( ) Their job ( ) Their family

( ) Health ( ) Decision-making

( ) Getting ahead ( ) Knowing what to believe

( ) Finding friends ( ) Peace of mind

( ) _____

3. In general, the biggest problem for older adults today is....

( ) Unwillingness to change ( ) Self-absorption

( ) The economic climate ( ) Disillusionment

( ) Overconcern with security and/or getting ahead

( ) The present social and political structure

( ) The world is changing too fast

( ) _____

4. I think that older adults generally think of younger adults as....

( ) Children ( ) Competitors ( ) Friends

( ) Like themselves

( ) People who don't have much to offer them

( ) People who are interesting to talk to

( ) People who probably won't listen

( ) People who may grow up someday

DIVERSITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Bible Study-Fellowship Retreat

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues;

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."

- I Corinthians, 12:4-12

"For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And if they were all one member, where were the body?

But now are they many members, yet but one body.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

I Corinthians, 12:14-21

The Holy Bible - King James Version

BIBLE STUDY - QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Read the text silently and then consider the following:

1. Paul calls the Church the body of Christ and draws an analogy which emphasizes the importance of having diversity within the body of Christ.

   If they were all one member...?

   If all the church people were the same age, what might we lose?

2. Paul speaks of a diversity of gifts.

   What are some of the particular gifts that young adults can offer the body of Christ?

   What gifts are older adults likely to offer?

   Have there been particular gifts exercised in your group that you have come to appreciate?

3. A question to think about for the future:

   What might we do in our congregation to encourage the exercise of a diversity of gifts by younger and older adults?

"Getting to Know You"

(1) Write down what time of day you generally like best.

(2) If you had some free time with nothing you had to do, and you were offered a choice of the following activities, what would be your first choice?... Your second: Rank order your choices from 1 to 10, number 10 being the activity that you would least like to do.

___Go to the movies

___Read a book

___Play your favorite sport

___Go to a large exciting party

___Take a walk

___Work on a special project

___Take a short trip out of town

___Go to a concert or play

___Talk with a small group of friends

___Be with one other person

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FAITH-DEVELOPMENT

Using the description for the Four Styles of Faith, think about your own life and experience. Try to think of a specific example of each style of faith in your own experience and history. Note each example with a few words in the grid below.

EXPERIENCED FAITH	AFFILIATIVE FAITH
SEARCHING FAITH	OWNED FAITH

In your small working group, describe <u>one</u> of these examples from your own experience.

Excercise # 3 - "I believe..."

Directions: We have talked some and looked at different styles of faith, different ways of believing, different ways of being related to the church. This exercise asks you to consider diversity in the content of faith, what people believe.

Listed below are a number of affirmations which one might make. Put a check mark next to those that you personally would affirm, that you would say "I believe..."

____Hard work will always pay off if you have faith in yourself and stick to it.

____The Bible is a valuable book to understand God's ways.

____Jesus is the Son of God.

____That to be a good Christian, it is necessary to go to church.

____That the miracles of Jesus actually happened just as the Bible says they did.

____That all of the Bible is literally true.

____That much of the Bible is made up of stories, myths, and poetry.

____That Jesus had a sense of humor.

____That Jesus lived a life without sin.

____That there is a supreme Being, personal force, or power for good which exists outside me.

____There is a life beyond death.

____That in his earthly life, there were some things that Jesus didn't know.

____That how you live with other people is more important than whether you go to church.

____That anyone who breaks a law should be given the same punishment as everyone else.

____That religion is one area of life that should be unchanging.

____That Christianity is the one true religion.

____That the most important moral rule is "Don't hurt other people."

____That there are times when telling a lie would be the right thing to do.

____The true Christian is sure that his beliefs are correct.

____Every person needs to have the feeling of security given by belonging to a congregation.

4 - A sermon starter

To the pastor:

A part of your approach in developing a ministry with students and young adults in your congregation might include a sermon to the whole congregation.

Included here is a "sermon starter," some thoughts to start your own meditation on the theme of ministry with young adults.

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YOUNG ADULTS AND THE CHURCH

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a days journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers..." (Luke 2:41-52)

In terms of traditional Jewish society, Jesus was on the verge of adulthood. A boy learned a trade by the age of twelve -- at the age of thirteen he was recognized by the community as an adult.

In our society, the transition to adulthood is later, more ambiguous, longer, and more complex. For a boy, sometime in late adolescence, he may wrest free of parental control and dependence, and some 15 years later find himself a householder with wife, two kids, a mortgage, and PTA meetings. The intervening years are the years of young adulthood.

These are years marked by mobility and experimentation, concern for identity and intimacy, concerns of vocation and career preparation, concern with sexuality and mating. Young adulthood is the period of transition from dependence to independence to interdependence that generally occurs between the ages of 18 and 30.

Consider the relationship of young adults to the church. There is in general a need to question what has been taught, as Jesus did on the verge of adulthood. Frequently we see a suspension of belief at some point, when an individual steps apart from all that he has been taught, and sorts through his belief. There is often a need to engage in what one survey calls "questionable personal activities" because the world and the self must be actively questioned. We see a movement from the dependent faith of childhood to the challenging, questioning faith of early adulthood. It is a time of seeking.

In a recent survey of entering college freshmen, 70% said that developing a philosophy of life was an important goal for them in college. Traditionally, colleges were the place to go to search and question in a protected environment. Today this is not so true -- the wall between the college and the "real world" is breeched in many places -- there are few "in loco parentis" restrictions, pranks are more likely to be met with criminal penalties, and, with all the advantages of the community college, there is the disadvantage that young people do not get away from their parental home and do not have a strong peer community to assist and test their development.

What can a church do? Is it a place where one can ask questions and experiment? The church is by and large unpopular with young adults. It may represent parents or the BIG PARENT in the head -- a controlling influence to get away from. Or it may seem uncaring. In one nationwide survey of church-related youth, 43% said, "If I were to stop going to my local church, no one would miss me." A third reason is the perceived lack of integrity of the church and the prejudice of church people -- young adults are idealistic. A fourth reason is that many churches cannot tolerate questioning and experimentation.

Well, the question is asked, What do young people want? That is parallel to the question What do women want? or What do Black people want? What do <u>those people</u> want? ... The initial question must be, What do I want? What do we want? What is our motivation? Is it for any reason important for us to interact with young adults?

We love and care for our children, we take a responsibility in our community, out of our own need to fulfull ourselves as persons. And as children become older and there is less need for our care, we still have a need, a need to share ourselves, to tell our story of who we are and what is important to us.

If we care and share with young adults out of our own need, we immediately overcome some of the objections to the church. We exhibit the care and concern which is so often lacking. We operate out of our integrity -- who we are. And we do not need to ask a pay-off from our action, there is no need to "get them in" or have them do our thing.

I am suggesting a special kind of caring. Parents care for their children without asking that that care be given back, but the child is dependent, and under discipline. Adults, at their best, care for each other in reciprocal ways -- not controlling each other, but giving and receiving. One form of caring reflects Dependence; the other reflects Interdependence. HOW do we exercise care towards those who are moving between the two?

Between these two models of care is what I would characterize as the care a good uncle might exercise to his niece or nephew -- the uncle can care for the other, but not demand obedience. He can treat the other as a person in his own right, but not demand a full reciprocity in the relationship. Perhaps if you have not had a good uncle, you remember a good teacher -- someone who really took you seriously as a person, and who helped you grow.

The good uncle or good teacher is a model of care between generations -- it is a model of one who is concerned for the other, and who lets the other go. It is a model of one who operates out of an integrity that is not afraid of questions.

I had an excellent teacher in my college years whom I will always remember because he absolutely rejected one of my papers. He called me in, and spent a lot of time with me, and he told me he absolutely couldn't accept my paper, but he gave me a chance to do it again in the light of what he had said. It stung at the time, but he cared enough about me and about his own work to spend time with me and help me learn. That is a model of care and integrity that may model God's care for us. We are both cared for and challenged -- we meet both mercy and truth.

We meet it differently at different stages in our lives. Think of an apple tree in early spring as the buds begin to open. As the warmth comes, all the energy goes into the bud. Then the whole purpose of the tree will strain towards the putting out of leaves and the growth of blossoms into full bloom. But after the full bloom, the blossom will die and fall off so that fruit may grow. Then after the full growth of the fruit, after it comes to perfection, it falls and dies for the life of the seed.

Young adulthood is like the time of blossoming -- it is not fruitbearing, it is not "productive" -- it seems more concerned with the ephemeral and with display. But without the blossom, there is no fruit. If we do not encourage the full development of the individual in the young adult years, there will be no productive years.

In older years we meet grace and judgement, and we are affirmed and challenged to produce fruit. In young adult years, the meeting with grace and judgement should challenge one to bloom. The congregation, the church, the synagogue might be a medium for that grace and judgement. At the adge of adulthood, Jesus found the Temple a place where there was an accepting attitude, a concern for truth, and an openness to questions. Where do we find that today, so that those who question may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Further References

I. Sources; an annotated bibliography of brief books

II. Study material for groups

III. Ministry with young adults

IV. Relating the church and the campus

I. SOURCES; AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BRIEF BOOKS

Extensive materials are available on human development, the dynamics of faith, and ministry in higher education. The following short list is selected because these are all books which condense useful information and insights into a few brief pages.

"Attitudes, Values, and Lifestyles of Young Adults in Greater Dayton";
A Summary of the Dayton Young Adult Survey. Miami Valley Young Adult Ministry, 3640 Colonel Glenn Highway, Fairborn, Ohio 45342 (1976). Price $1.50.

The Greater Dayton area is regarded as a "barometer" or "weather vane" for the entire nation. In 1976 a survey was made with assistance from the Gallup Poll of young adults (18 to 29 years of age) in the Dayton area, highlighting the young adults' religious character, beliefs and practices. This summary reports the findings, needs, issues, and resultant visions for young adult ministries.

The Care and Couseling of Youth in Church, by Paul Irwin.
Creative Pastoral Care & Counseling Series, Fortress Press, Philadelphia (1975).

Irwin focuses on the importance of the relationship between older and younger adults, explaining and using the concept of the "adult guarantor." While stressing the importance of pastoral ministry he includes a number of comments on the use of the Bible and group techniques in ways that enhance individual growth. The focus is on work with adolescents, but for both clergy and lay people concerned with young adult ministry this is a clear and practical introduction to the dynamics of persnal ministry with younger people.

Ministry in a Learning Society, ed. Tecla Sund Reklau.
Lutheran Council in the USA, 130 North Wells, Rm.2200, Chicago, IL 60606 (1973) $1.00.

The urban ministers who contributed to this report find that "the term 'campus' has become dysfunctional as a concept in urban education and has often frustrated and fragmented the ministry." They see the future of urban campus ministry in the interaction of the church, university, and city.

The basic report details no one form for this ministry. Its basic usefulness lies in its conceptual reorientation. The purpose of learning is now for participation in life, no longer merely a preparation for life. The context of ministry is not just the campus, but the city. The needs which ministry addresses are those of people living in an urbanized, learning society.

Some specific examples of ministries based on this conceptual framework are described in a follow-up booklet entitled "Marks." In addition, a bibliography is available, and a theological reflection on ministry in a learning

society entitled "Transformed by Renewal." The Lutheran "Circle" publication has continued occasional articles and reprints on these themes. All these publications are available from the above address.

"Parish Ministry to Students", a discussion paper, is also a Lutheran publication available from the same source at 15¢ per copy. This is a brief and useful tool for raising some basic questions about the church, the Gospel, and the role of laity, pastor, and campus minister in ministry with students.

The Problem of Faith Development in Young Adults, by Robert T. Gribbon. The Alban Institute, Mount St. Alban, Washington, D.C.20016 (1977). $2.50.

A twelve-page monograph covering basic transitions and development in young adulthood; intellectual and ethical development; Christian belief and faith-development; and implications for ministry. It is the basic theory statement from the Commuter Student/Young Adult Ministry Project.

Will Our Children Have Faith? by John H. Westerhoff, III. Seabury Press, New York (1976). 126 pp, hardbound.

Westerhoff has long wrestled with the question of how faith is transmitted from generation to generation. Here he develops the typology of Experiential Faith, Affiliative Faith, Searching Faith, and Owned Faith as a new basis for Christian education. This is essential reading for a first-hand understanding of the typology and its practical applications.

II. STUDY MATERIAL FOR GROUPS

All of the following materials are concerned with how the church nurtures the development of faith, and all are appropriate for group use.

Some suggested uses are:

1) As supplementary material in your church library.
2) To explore further some area of interest after a study group has completed the course "Faith-Development in Young Adults."
3) To use with another group in the congregation to develop a parallel interest.
4) To use with an intergenerational study group which includes young and older adults.

Religion and Human Experience, by Andrew Panzarella, FSC.
St. Mary's College Press, Winona, Minn. (1977) 106 pp.

Five chapters with discussion questions describe the process of religious development and mature religion from a psychologist's point of view. It would be particularly useful for a small intergenerational group wanting to explore the dynamics of searching faith.

Religious Pilgrimage, and study guide, by Jean M. Haldane.
The Alban Institute, Mount St. Alban, Washington,D.C.20016 (1975).$3.00.

Designed to help a group of lay people explore the connection between their own religious journeys and membership in their local church. This material could be most useful in helping lay people discover their own faith as a resource for ministry with young adults.

Action Information on Lay Ministry, and study guide.
The Alban Institute, Mount St. Alban, Washington,D.C.20016. $3.00

Readings from ACTION INFORMATION with a guide for a 5-week course, designed to help people explore what lay ministry means in terms of inner life, outer calling, and relationship to the congregation.

Bridging the Gap, and study guide, by Merton P. Strommen.
Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. (1973).

Concerned with youth, ages 15-23, and their alienation from the church. It draws on extensive research about the "gap" between youth and adults in the church and advocates warm and concerned interaction between youth and adults.

Human Growth and the Family, by Eleanore B. Luckey and George W. Wise.
Graded Press, The Methodist Publishing House, 201 Eighth Ave.,Nashville, Tenn. 37202 (1970).

A thirteen-session study book which traces the relationship of the individual to the family throughout the life cycle. It would be a useful parallel resource in a family-centered congregation because it raises the question of how indivduals' needs differ at different stages of life.

III. MINISTRY WITH YOUNG ADULTS

People responsible for denominational resources are increasingly paying attention to young adult ministry.

The June 1978 issue of "Baptist Leader" is devoted to Ministry with Young Adults and includes an annotated bibliography.

The Lutheran Church in America Division of Parish Services publishes a newsletter on Ministries with Young Adults as does the United States Catholic Conference.

Various other denominations have packets of materials. Contact the people responsible in your own denomination and find out what materials are available. Ask that your name be placed on the mailing list.

Developing Ministry with Young Adults (Byron Knight, editor) is a cassette and book packet including interviews with young adults and examples of ministries with young adults around the country.

Available for $35 from Thesis Cassettes, P.O. Box 11724, Pittsburg, PA 15228.

IV. RELATING THE CHURCH AND THE CAMPUS

Several projects have been concerned with developing a relationship between local churches and community colleges. They have produced some very practical and usable materials.

So There's a Community College in Your Town; A guide for local church ministry with the nearby community college. Produced by the Community College Team of the United Ministries in Higher Education. UMHE Communication Office, 3 West 29th Street, NY, NY 10001. $3.00

"The basic concept underlying this book is that the community college and the church share many common concerns, goals, and interests and seek to serve many of the same people in the community.

Handbook and Toolkit, by J. Springer. Pennsylvania Baptist Campus Ministry, Box 282, Oakmont, PA 15139. $2.00.

The design is intended primarily for local clergy groups interested in initiating a ministry with the local community college. The approach is to survey and identify where the points of access are, and Jay identifies a number of possible alternatives. It seems particularly appropriate in town situations where there is some sense of community and local ownership.

The Workbook, the Community College Project of the Metropolitan Task Force of the Illinois Commission, 1046 West Polk Street, Chicago,IL 60607. $3.00.
Contains a number of practical programs and strategies that have worked in ten identified arenas of ministry activity.

Notebook for Ministry with Community Colleges, Division of Campus Ministry and Educational Services, Lutheran Council in the USA, 35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1847, Chicago, IL 60601. $2.50.

A three-ring binder notebook intended for use by congregations concerned with a local community college. Generally reflects an interactive model growing out of a church committee concerned for the campus. Also available from the same source are a number of brief papers and resources on the topic of church and campus.

Feedback Sheet

Since we learn from the response of others to our work, we invite readers to comment on the contents of this book, on related studies, and from their own experience. This page may be taken out and mailed to the author at the address below.

We are particularly interested in being in touch with congregations which have used the lay ministry study course. If you have used the course, would you please let us know.

The Rev. Robert T. Gribbon
Director, Commuter Student Project
301-422-4308 202-244-3278

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SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS

AVAILABLE FROM THE ALBAN INSTITUTE:

Spiritual Growth: An Empirical Exploration of its Meaning, Sources, and Implications, by Tilden H. Edwards, Jr., Loren B. Mead, Parker J. Palmer, and James P. Simmons ($3.00) The report of a research project that turned up some hypotheses and findings about the processes of spiritual growth and the meaning of spiritual maturity.

Religious Pilgrimage: the individual religious journey and how it is impacted by the socialization process in one Episcopal Church, Jean M. Haldane ($2.50) An important research study based on in-depth interviews with lay people, which raises serious questions about the relationship between the institutional church and the individual religious journey.

The Task of the Church and the Role of its Members, Bruce Reed ($2.50) The director of the Grubb institute for Behavioural Studies in London describes a new approach to the task of the church, based on a unique understanding of dependence, and drawn from many disciplines and a broad range of consulting and research experience.

Learning to Share the Ministry, James R. Adams and Celia A. Hahn ($3.00) This book tells how laity and clergy at St. Mark's, Capitol Hill, in Washington, DC have been learning to share the ministry, with the minister's sabbatical as an important event in the process. A study guide is included.

The Pastor as Newcomer, Roy M. Oswald ($2.50) Research from the Alban Institute Pastorate Start Up project provides practical suggestions about how clergy can avoid some of the pitfalls and take advantage of some of the opportunities of the first 12-18 months in a new pastorate.

Religious Authenticity in the Clergy, John C. Fletcher ($2.00) The president of Inter/Met describes three crises through which a clergyperson becomes authenticated as minister of a congregation. A fresh treatment of the stages in the relationship between pastor and people.

Action Information on Lay Ministry. Readings on lay ministry from ACTION INFORMATION, with a guide for a five-week course. $2.50. Study Guide: 50¢. 10 or more copies $1.50 each, with Study Guide free.

THE ALBAN INSTITUTE is an open partnership of people who want to improve the quality of religious life and religious institutions, with a special focus on the local congregation.

Committed to working for better congregations, the Alban Institute exists to provide two kinds of support:

> *making information available -- linking people who are finding out how to do the job better with those who need to know. This is one way the Alban Institute works to help congregations become increasingly clear, focused, and effective in supporting lay and ordained members in their work of ministry. The Institute makes information available through publications (books and study guides, papers and monographs, and ACTION INFORMATION, our quarterly journal) and also through training events, referrals, and direct consultative or advisory services.*
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